

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

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FROM

I T O H INTERNATIONAL PATENT OFFICE

32<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR, YEBISU GARDEN PLACE TOWER20-3 EBISU 4-CHOME, SHIBUYA-KU  
TOKYO 150-6032, JAPANFACSIMILE: 3-5424-2527  
2525

TELEPHONE: 3-5424-2511

TO

CONFIRMATION

Number of pages 5  
(Including this page)WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION  
PCT DIVISION  
34 chemin des Colombettes  
1211 GENEVA 20  
SWITZERLAND

May 31, 2005

Our Ref: SG04002PCT

(fax &amp; courier)

"INFORMAL COMMENTS"

Re: International Appln. No. PCT/JP2004/018379

International Filing Date: 09.12.2004 (09 December 2004)

Applicant: SEGA CORPORATION et al

Agent: ITOH Tadahiko

Dear Sir,

The applicant, who received the Written Opinion of the International Searching Authority relating to the above-identified International Application transmitted on 1 March 2005, hereby files an Informal Comments as in the attached sheets.

Please acknowledge the safe receipt of this letter by return facsimile.

Very truly yours,



Tadahiko Itoh

Attachment: Informal Comments (4 sheets)

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## INFORMAL COMMENTS

(1) The applicant wishes to comment on the international search report and the written opinion of the international searching authority with respect to International Application No. PCT/JP2004/018379, as follows. In addition, the applicant wishes to note that a claim amendment under PCT Article 19(1) was filed on April 19, 2005.

(2) None of the six documents (documents 1 to 6) cited in the international search report discloses or suggests the "distributing unit" which is one of the indispensable features of the invention as recited in independent claims 1-5.

The "distributing unit" according to the invention serves as important features in increasing the functions of an article getting game device. The applicant cannot agree to the written opinion of the international searching authority stating that the invention does not involve an inventive step over the cited documents, because the cited documents do not disclose the above features of the invention.

Claim 6 included in the originally filed claims means that the "distributing unit" is provided in a drop route of articles. In order to clarify the distinctions between the invention and the cited documents, each of the amended claims 1-5 which were filed by the applicant explicitly recites the features of the invention that the "distributing unit" is provided in a drop route of the articles delivered to the transfer position.

Namely, the "distributing unit" according to the invention (the amended claims 1 to 5) is provided in the drop route of the articles delivered to the transfer position. The articles are not distributed freely to a position where the practice of a player does not involve. According to the invention, a distribution place can be chosen according to the practice of a player, and the functions of the article getting game machine can be increased. However, none of the cited documents demonstrates such disclosure or suggestion.

In this respect, document 1 (JP 10-179926A; KONAMI CO., LTD.) teaches that the medal inserted from the medal chute 15 is temporarily placed on the moving table 13, and then it is distributed to either the refund chute 18 or the collection chute 17. The medal distributed to the collection chute 17 is accumulated in the upper prize box 10. However, there is no teaching in document 1 of a distributing unit which is provided in a drop route of the medals being distributed. The teaching of document 1 does not demonstrate the above-mentioned "distributing unit" features of the invention by which the functions of the article getting game machine can be increased.

That is, according to the teaching of document 1, the upper prize box 10 is automatically replenished with the medals from the falling tube 22 disposed above the upper prize box 10. Clearly, this upper prize box 10 of document 1 differs from the "first accumulation unit (jackpot tray)" of the invention. According to the invention, the articles are distributed to the first accumulation unit

according to direct manipulation of a player.

In addition, it is easier for a player to get, rather than an article falling to the jackpot tray, a prize falling to another place, for example, the pusher base on the side of the player's seat, out of the refund unit. It does not necessarily become advantageous for the player that the prize falls to the jackpot tray. Therefore, accumulation of the articles to the first accumulation unit according to the invention is not "automatic accumulation" and it can be called "accumulation contrary to the intention of a player". The structure, operation and effects of the game machine of document 1 in which the "automatic accumulation" is performed clearly differ from those of the applicant's invention. According to the game machine of the invention, another target which the player will set up is not to drop a prize to the jackpot tray, and the game functions can be increased.

Generally speaking, the technological concept of distributing the medals before accumulation is not disclosed or suggested by document 1. Even if "the article delivery part which receives an article from the container part and delivers the article to a predetermined transfer position according to operation which is performed by a player on the operation input part" taught by document 2 (JP 2003-144740A; CAPCOM CO., LTD.) is combined with the teaching of document 1, the teaching of document 1 and document 2 in combination will not realize the structure, operation and effects of the applicant's invention.

The applicant believes that there is a difficulty in the

assumption in the written opinion that the medal inserted by the player as in document 1 be replaced with the article received by the article delivery part as in document 2. That is, according to the teaching of document 1, the medal 1 is inserted from the outside of the game machine by a player, and this inserting action is done based on the player's intention to start a game. As opposed to this, according to the teaching of document 2, the article received by the article delivery part is what is get according to manipulation of a player within the game machine. This article is an in-between result of the game, and the medal 1 of document 1 and the article of document 2 cannot be placed in the same rank.

In addition, even if the teaching of document 2 is combined with the teaching of document 1, the teaching of document 1 and document 2 in combination will not realize the structure, operation and effects of the applicant's invention, because both do not disclose or suggest the "distributing unit provided in a drop route of the articles delivered to the transfer position" as recited in the amended claims.

(3) As described in the foregoing, the distinctions of the applicant's claimed invention from the cited documents 1 and 2 which were the basis of the judgment in the written opinion of the international searching authority are made clear, and the applicant believes it reasonable that the invention involves inventive step over the cited documents.